

OBEY SAYS WASHINGTON LOBBYISTS LOST EFFORTS TO BLOCK HEALTH & EDUCATION REFORMS

Reforms to Benefit Tens of Millions of Working Families

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Washington lobbyists lost two fights last week, one on health insurance reform and one on education, Seventh District Congressman Dave Obey (D-WI) said.

“Over 1,500 insurance company lobbyists lost their fight to be able to discriminate against people or reject them outright due to pre-existing conditions. They also lost their fight to prevent us from targeting waste, fraud and abuse in Medicare. Banking lobbyists lost their fight against our efforts to save \$68 billion in student loan programs by cutting out needless middlemen.”

“People who have insurance and people who don’t will both be winners,” Obey said. “Millions of Americans will now receive tax credits to allow them to afford insurance coverage that up to now has been beyond their reach.”

Obey continued by pointing out that most small businesses will be exempt from the requirement

to provide health insurance. He added that those who choose to provide insurance for their employees will receive tax credits to help them do so and “will no longer be saddled with premiums that are 18 percent higher than large firms pay.”

Also included in the health insurance reform bill were important reforms to our student loan system. These reforms are projected to save taxpayers \$68 billion over the next decade by ending the subsidies given to banks and middlemen who handle student loans. A portion of the money saved will expand and strengthen the federal Pell Grant program.

Obey noted, “Working families trying to scrape money together to send their kids to college will be big winners. It’s about time the Congress finally realized that America cannot afford a \$68 billion giveaway to the banks.”

Obey said that Wisconsin Republican Tom Petri deserves special credit for leading the fight for student loan reform for years, “even when his party leadership bucked him all the way.”

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